

Traffic Incident Management Strategic Plan Phase 2



Ozarks Transportation Organization
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Traffic Incident Management

Emergency Medical · Fire · Law Enforcement



Traffic Operations · Media · Towing & Recovery
Ozarks Transportation Organization

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Introduction

Traffic incidents, including crashes, disabled vehicles, and debris on the road, create unsafe driving conditions; put motorists and responder lives at risk; and account for approximately 25 percent of all traffic delays.

For each minute that a freeway travel lane is blocked during peak use, an estimated 4 minutes of delay result after the incident is cleared. This estimate accounts for 4.2 billion hours per year in delays nationally. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Transportation Strategic Plan Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 – FY2015 reports that Americans burn more than 2.8 billion gallons of gasoline every year while stuck in incident-related traffic.

Traffic Incident Management consists of a planned and coordinated multi-disciplinary process to detect, respond to, and clear traffic incidents so that traffic flow may be restored as safely and quickly as possible. In order to be effective, TIM teams must have involvement from a wide range of stakeholders, as shown in the table below. Meaningful TIM reduces the duration and impacts of traffic incidents and improves the safety of motorists, crash victims and emergency responders. A “good” TIM program is one in which responders go home every time, roadways are blocked for the minimum amount of time, and secondary crashes are reduced or eliminated.

Table 1: Traffic Incident Management Stakeholders

Traditional Responders	Special Circumstance Responders	Incident Information Providers	Transportation System Providers and Users
Law Enforcement	Hazardous Materials Contractors	Public Safety Communications	Traveling Public
Fire and Rescue	Coroners and Medical Examiners	Traffic Media	Trucking Industry
Emergency Medical Services	Emergency Management Agencies	Traveler Information Services	Insurance Industry
Towing and Recovery	Environmental/ Natural Resources/ Health Departments	Transportation Agencies	Public Transportation Providers
Transportation Agencies			Motorist Organizations

Source: 2010 Traffic Incident Management Handbook Update

Traffic Incident Management efforts in the Ozarks are led by the Ozark *Transportation Organization's* TIM Committee. The committee formed in 2015 and has been growing since. The committee adopted the *TIM Strategic Plan, Phase I* in November of 2016. This plan saw progress

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toward the adoption of response procedures, the regular debriefing of major incidents, the acquisition of safety equipment for local responders, and surveying of local towing providers. This Strategic Plan, Phase II will see the formalizing of the committee's structure and increased integration of response efforts.

[Why this is important...]

Responders are being struck and killed at traffic incidents in the U.S. on average:

- 5 Firefighters each year
- 1 Law Enforcement Officer each Month
- 1 Tow Truck Operator each week

The OTO TIM Traffic Incident Management Strategic Plan, Phase II, is divided into the following chapters:

- Introduction
- Progress
- Goals
- Actions

The Progress chapter includes a brief description of progress made towards implementing the Phase I plan. Based on the outlined progress, the Goals chapter describes the two overarching goals for this Phase II plan. Finally, implementation actions for the next two years will be outlined in the Actions Chapter.

Progress

Members of the TIM Committee adopted their first strategic plan in November 2016. The plan outlined many ongoing actions the committee felt would benefit the region's TIM program and discrete actions the committee wanted to complete. Since adopting the plan, the committee has initiated many of the ongoing actions. Some of the discrete actions have fallen by the wayside. Formalizing the committee's structure is one example of a delayed action.

The committee also completed, or initiated, actions that were not outlined in the 2016 strategic plan. These actions include the successful TIM annual exercises and MoDOT coordination meetings. The committee believe these unplanned actions moved the region's TIM program forward and were well worth the effort.

This chapter outlines the progress that was, or was not, made toward achieving the committee's Phase I strategic plan and moving the region's TIM program forward. Actions included in the Phase I strategic plan are outlined first. Unplanned actions are discussed at the chapter's end.

Strategic Plan Actions

The Phase I strategic plan included thirteen actions, prioritized into three categories. Meaningful progress was initiated on nine. However, some actions were not addressed. Standardizing secondary crash reporting was deemed beyond the scope of a regional committee. Given the recent deployment of advanced ITS software, the data did not yet exist for good performance targets. The progress made and delays experienced are discussed below.

Priority A	Priority B	Priority C
Draft By-Laws	Establish Performance Targets	Organized Funding List
Prioritized Needs List	Online After Action Report	Regional Towing Inventory
TIM Response Procedures	Inventory Training Venues	Medical Examiner MOU
Promote TIM	Training Census	Checklist for Work Zones
Standardize Secondary Crash Reporting		

Progress

Progress was made on nine actions during the two years of plan implementation. Some actions were combined and others were pursued individually.

Progress

Prioritized Needs and Funding List

The TIM Committee has been very successful in meeting the personal safety needs of local responders. Vest, cones, and signs are simple purchases, but they make a significant safety difference. During 2017, 152 safety vests and 30 safety cones were purchased, in cooperation with the Southwest Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety, for local responders. In 2018, the OTO was able to partner again with the Coalition for Roadway Safety to purchase, 78 safety cones, 46 safety vests, and 6 pink emergency signs. For 2019, local responders received 60 safety vest, 114 cones, 13 pink emergency signs. A total of 258 safety vests, 222 safety cones, and 19 pinks emergency signs have been awarded to local responders.



Delivery of Cones and Safety Vests in 2017

The committee believes addressing these smaller needs is the best avenue for advancing the region's TIM program. Some conversations were had about regional technology investments, but those didn't make sense with current funding sources. Given the focus on smaller needs, the Southwest Coalition for Roadway Safety was identified as the best funding source. Annual funding is available, and these small needs are helpful in spending funds left at the end of the state's fiscal year.

Promote TIM

The TIM Committee has participated in responder safety awareness events during 2017 and 2018. Press conferences were held in conjunction with national awareness campaigns and the media was involved with the committee's Regional TIM exercises. Through these activities, the committee was able to get information about TIM to the public.

The Missouri statewide TIM awareness press conference was held in conjunction with the region's 2019 TIM exercise. The press conference included Missouri's First Lady, Mrs. Teresa Parson, MoDOT's director,

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Patrick McKenna, law enforcement representatives, and members of MoDOT's Safety Office.

Training Census

A training census was conducted by OTO staff in early 2019. Towing companies were targeted, and staff sought to determine how many operators worked in the region and how many were current on their training. The identified 16 towing and recovery service providers and 125 towing operators. Of the 125 operators, 80 had had TIM training and 40 had had it in the last two years. This successful training will allow area training providers to target the services providers with the lowest training rates.

Online After Action Survey

The TIM committee's process for discussing and learning from major incidents continues to evolve. In the committee's first iterations, online surveys were sent out to responders after major incidents. Staff tried for several months to get a workflow in place that would make the surveys successful. In the end, the online survey proved ineffective. Participation was low, answers were vague, and it was difficult to be timely. In late 2018, the committee made the discussion to dedicate agenda time to discussing major incidents. The information shared during in-person discussions should be more valuable than the information provided in the surveys.

A total of 258 safety vests, 222 safety cones, and 19 pinks emergency signs have been awarded to local responders.

Response Procedures

The committee was reviewed full drafts of the operations procedures on three occasions. During this review, the guidelines have been both expanded and condensed. Some elements added after the first review were removed and set aside for this new strategic plan after the second review. Attendance for the third review was too low for those in attendance to feel comfortable adopting.

Work Zone Checklists

While the committee has not directly considered a work zone checklist, Regional partners, led by MoDOT, have refined their work zone protocols. Recent construction on I-44 led to an unacceptable number

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Statewide TIM Awareness Week Press Conference,, Springfield Airport, 2019

of incidents. In response, traffic management receives more consideration during work zone planning.

Inventory Training Venues

The committee has approached this action in a different way than initially envisioned. Rather than a static effort to determine who conducts TIM training, the committee chose to implement a Training Calendar that serve as a repository of training information. Agencies could submit trainings that were available to the public.

By-Laws

The committee considered draft by-laws on two occasions. An initial draft was reviewed in February 2017. Some edits were made, and the by-laws taken back to the committee in May 2018. The committee was generally supportive, but attendance was low enough that the decision was made to delay adoption. The by-laws have not been included on subsequent agendas.

Delays

The committee faced a number of challenges while attempting to consider and complete action items.

Schedules were a source of general delays. The May 2017 meeting was postponed due to severe weather and was rescheduled during Mr. Thomason's paternity leave. The August 2017, 2018, 2019 meetings were solely dedicated to the completion of the FHWA TIM Self-Assessment. Additional, attendance was very low at the May 2018 and February 2019

Progress

meetings. This resulted in only six of the committee's ten meetings during the implementation period having action taken.

Standardize Secondary Crash Reporting

The committee has discussed the importance of secondary reporting on multiple occasions. The challenge associated with any standardization efforts lies in the statewide nature of crash reporting. The Missouri State Highway Patrol manages the crash reporting system and individual agencies manage how the data is reported in their jurisdictions. There is no mechanism in the existing system to associate secondary crashes with the initial crash. The committee believes the statewide TIM committee is better positioned to address this issue.

Performance Targets

Monitoring performance and tracking improvement is an important aspect of TIM. At the time of plan adoption, the TMC of the Ozarks was nearing the full rollout of management software that would allow for incident tracking on all major OTO roads. The software has since been implemented and protocols and procedures have been developed ensure consistent data is collected. The TMC has also expanded hours of local operation. The region is reaching the point that a good baseline of data exists and targets can be set. This action is prime for completion during this planning cycle.

Medical Examiner MOU

The need to better coordinate with the Medical Examiner's Office after fatal incidents was initially mentioned during the planning session in mid-2016. Subsequently, the need never came up again in conversation.

Non-Strategic Plan Progress

The committee also addressed important actions that were not included in the strategic plan. The regional exercises began before the strategic plan was adopted.

Regional Exercises

The TIM committee has hosted three Regional Exercises since 2016. While not included in phase 1 of the Strategic Plan, the annual event provides great opportunities to engage with regional responders, interact with the media, and generally increase TIM awareness. All three exercises have been covered by local media.

Self-Assessments

The completion of the annual FHWA TIM self-assessment is an important annual action item. It provides a great opportunity to



Regional TIM Exercise in 2018

critically evaluate all elements of the TIM programs. Participants are able to identify actions for their own organizations, and the committee is able to identify collaborative actions.

Construction Coordination Meetings

The TIM committee served as an important venue for discussing construction impacts of the US-65 Rebuild projects. The meetings provided responders an opportunity to ask questions of MoDOT and for MoDOT to learn from responders.

Goals

Two overarching goals were identified by the TIM committee. Members wanted to (1) continue to advance the region's practical implementation of TIM best practices, and they wanted to (2) make sure the committee would continue to function after the retirement of Bruce Pettus, the committee's current champion.

The goals of the previous strategic plan were selected from the 18 national strategies identified by the *National Traffic Incident Management Coalition*. These 18 strategies further progress towards the *National Unified Goal* (NUG) of (1) Responder Safety, (2) Safe Quick Clearance, and (3) Prompt, Reliable Interoperable Communications. The committee chose to draw from these national strategies because the region's program was young and they provided a ready-mix set of actions to focus on. Now that the committee has met for two years, there is a better understanding of our regional needs. The committee can see where progress has been made and where progress has stalled.

A description of the two overarching goals of this strategic plan are outlined below. Along with a description of the goal, critical objectives are also outlined. These objectives highlights how the committee will achieve its goals.

Practical TIM Implementation

A key focus of the TIM committee is seeing the region's first responders continue deploying best-practices during roadside responses. The practical implementation of best practices leads to quicker, safer responses that reduce risk to responders and reduce impacts to the region's roadway travelers. This practical implementation will be achieved through increased interagency cooperation, performance management, and training.

A key focus of the TIM committee is seeing the region's first responders continue deploying best-practices during roadside responses.

Interagency Cooperation: Gaining regional buy-in for the committee TIM Response Procedures will be critically important. Committee leadership must reach out to local jurisdictions, introduce the committee, and learn how it can help jurisdictions advance the state of the practice. This outreach should also lead to formal agreements on the handling of important response activities, such as the movement of deceased individuals.

Goals

Performance Management: The committee must understand how the region's TIM activities are currently performing before it can set targets for improvements. Existing data collection efforts allow for the calculation of baseline performance and the setting of specific improvement targets. Performance measures should focus on metrics central to Traffic Incident Management, such as roadway clearance and incident clearance.

Training: The committee must ensure a broad swath of regional responders have a common base of TIM understanding. Regular training opportunities, and regional exercises will ensure responders have access to this base of knowledge. A regular survey of responders will help monitor progress and identify agencies that should be targeted with training opportunities.

Committee Formalization

The TIM Committee currently operates in an informal way. The committee is comprised of representatives of area agencies, but there is no formal listing of committee members. When decisions are considered, those in attendance do consider if a 'quorum' is present. Bruce Pettus, Incident Coordinator with MoDOT, is the committee's current champion and is central to activities completed by the committee. Bruce has plans to retire and the committee has identified this as a key risk. The committee's structure must be formalized and new leadership identified if the committee is to remain effective.

Succession Planning: Champions must be identified for the committee and for the committee's regional TIM exercise. These leaders must be respected throughout the region and must be willing to commit their time. Responsibility for the committee and for the regional exercise should be divided. This will reduce the required workload and will allow the responsibility for the exercise to shift to an agency with exercise expertise.

Finalize Committee Structure: Some progress has been made toward the creation of committee bylaws. The committee needs to finalize the bylaws and adopt them. This will give structure to the committee and will help new members better understand the purpose of the committee.

The implementation of these goals will allow the TIM Committee to improve roadside responses and ensure it can continue to grow moving into the future.

Actions

The TIM Committee has identified eleven actions that will help the region achieve its two over-arching goals. These actions are well defined and are within the control of the regional TIM committee. The table below contents these eleven actions.

GOAL	
Objective	Action
Practical Implementation	
Interagency Cooperation	Endorsement of OTO TIM Operations Guidelines by Local Jurisdictions
	MOU with Examiner's Office Concerning Vehicle Movements
	Site Visits with Agency Leadership
Performance Management	Formalize Incident Clearance Time Target
	Formalize Roadway Clearance Time Target
Training	Hold TIM Training Quarterly in OTO Area
	Bi-annual Training Survey to Determine Training Needs
	Conduct Annual TIM Exercise
Committee Formalization	
Succession Planning	Regional Exercise Procedures
	Identify Future Co-Chairs
Finalize Committee Structure	Establish By-Laws

Site visits with agency leadership will help build regional support, and ultimately endorsement, of the OTO's TIM Operations Guidelines. The improve relationships will help local agencies establish common procedures for the movement of deceased individuals. By formalizing performance measures, the committee will be able to better measurement improvements in response time as the region expands access to training. By identifying the next round of committee leader and formalizing procedures for the Regional TIM exercise, the committee will be ensuring it can continue to function when Bruce Pettus retires.

This strategic plan should guide the committee actions over the next 2 years. The new committee leadership can lead the group through another round of strategic planning in 2021.

This report was prepared in cooperation with the USDOT, including FHWA and FTA, as well as the Missouri Department of Transportation. The opinions, findings, and conclusions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission, the Federal Highway Administration or the Federal Transit Administration.